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## THE NEW UNIONISM—THE PROBLEM OF THE UNSKILLED WORKER

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The rapid economic evolution of the last decade, which brought about the organization of a third of our industries into monopolies and combinations, has brought with it an equally portentous change in the organization of labor. A new form of industrial organization, "the trust," now dominates the world of capital. The "trust" came from a former decade, but the thing as we know it, "a dominating combination of money, property, brains, industrial or commercial enterprise or experience," is a creation of the last few years. The new "labor" unions, the form of labor organization the last decade has brought into power, are as distinct from the old "trade" unions as is the new industrial trust from the old legal makeshift that went by that name, or as are the new allied banks, trust companies, railways and municipal corporations from predecessors which accepted competition not as the exception but as the rule.

If the era of trusts has required the rewriting of political economy and industrial history, the era of new unionism requires the rewriting of the economic theory of labor unions and the recasting of the history of their development. The standard works on trade union economy and trade union history, based on English experience and the industrial organization of a period rapidly passing away, are as obsolete to-day as are the competitive economics of Adam Smith.

The policies of the new unionism, whether good or bad, are not the result of arbitrary acts of labor leaders. The evolution of industry itself, the introduction of new machinery, the further subdivision of labor and the integration of industries brought about by the increasing number of functions of the *larger establishments* and *trusts*, is forcing the new policies. We may approve of the increasing democracy of the new unionism, of the decreasing frequency and success of the restrictions on machinery, output, and apprentices; or we may disapprove of the reduction of wages to a level, of the growing use of the boycott, the sympathetic strike

and political action and the increasing area and intensity of the strike. But each and every one of these policies is a direct and necessary result of the fundamental change evolution of industry is effecting in the character of the work the workman is required to perform.

In Great Britain, and in this country until recent years, the unions were composed of workmen relatively skilled, because in most industries skilled work was formerly more important than unskilled. Now the situation is almost completely reversed. New machinery and the better organization of industry has reduced the relative number of skilled men employed, has simplified their work and has bridged the gulf that formerly separated them from the unskilled by introducing an elaborate system of helpers and general hands. In times of severe strikes these latter workmen can replace a large part of the skilled men. Recognizing this fact from hard experience one union after another has decided to take the unskilled in. Once taken in the unskilled form a majority of the union. Then follows the abandonment of time-honored customs, the adoption of new policies as unwelcome to the employer and less understood by the public than were the old, and in short a revolution in the labor movement.

The key to the new unionism is the new importance of unskilled labor. The old unions, consisting of skilled men, demanded higher wages for themselves and left unskilled labor where it was. The economic basis of their demand was the "skill" they possessed. Their monopoly or partial control of a certain grade of labor, their "rent of ability" was due either to dexterity, that is, to the greater difficulty and longer apprenticeship of their trades, or to its degree of separation from the next most similar operation of some other class of workmen. The introduction of new machinery and the further subdivision of labor both decrease the amount of dexterity required and place helpers at operations nearer to that of the "skilled" worker. Both his skill and his monopoly of his trade are threatened with extinction.

Intelligence, a general understanding of machinery, an ability to co-operate with the next man, are perhaps more required than ever, but the old "skill" of the artisan and the old exclusive lines of the trade are becoming a thing of the past. Men are more specialized than ever, in the sense of being divided into more classes.

But the difficulty of passing from one of the new classes to another is not so great as it was nor is so much time required to learn the trade.

The reader will recognize the truth of the above generalizations as to the changes in the character of the modern workman's tasks, but he will not appreciate their importance until he has examined the result of the recent Census.

Already the unskilled constitute a heavy majority in industry. In 1900, there were 11,358,312 working *men* in the United States, if we include as workingmen all employees in trade, transportation, manufacture and direct service, and exclude only agriculture and professional service. (See Census of Occupations, Twelfth Census, Vol. II, p. cx.; I, IV.) Of these a large proportion are relatively unskilled, including for instance 2,505,267 laborers, 1,106,306 clerks and salesmen, 538,029 teamsters. But this is only the beginning. Among the enumerated employees of the building trades are some 1,200,000 workingmen. Of these 600,000 are carpenters, mostly not very skilled and about 100,000 are helpers, apprentices, etc. Of the 581,728 employees of mines and quarries in 1902, only 324,430 are entered as miners and quarrymen. Of the others 152,302 are entered as other wage-earners who are principally unskilled; 18,376 are miners' helpers, 8,740 firemen, 13,544 timbermen, 11,857 boys under sixteen years of age, etc. (See Bureau of Census, Bulletin 9.) Of 1,189,315 railway employees enumerated by the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1902, 886,220 were neither officers, station masters, engineers, firemen, conductors, machinists, carpenters nor telegraphers, but "other" station men, trainmen, shopmen, trackmen, switchmen and clerks, all classes that are relatively unskilled.

So with the manufacturing industries. Here we may divide the workers into relatively skilled and unskilled, by selecting as a dividing line some wage rate which includes above it those classes known as skilled workers, and below it those known as unskilled in the trade itself. The Census of Wages and Employees showed that three-quarters of the men in the cotton industry, for instance, were employed in occupations in which the majority did not receive as much as \$10.00 a week, and a majority of the women in occupations in which most of them did not get \$6.50 a week when the mills were in operation. The same proportions applied to all the industry,

as well as to the establishments examined, would show 105,000 males and 63,000 females in the class of relatively unskilled workers.

The same method of calculation shows large numbers to fall within the classes of the relatively unskilled in nearly every industry. A majority of the indicated number of employees in the industries in Table I received less than the indicated remuneration when at work. The average *earnings* are not given. As distinct from the wage rate, the earnings would in each case be less than the latter in proportion to the number of days the men were idle through the closing of the works, accidents, sickness or any other cause. In some of the industries the regular seasonal idleness is as much as a fourth of the year, and to this must be added all idleness affecting the individual workman.

TABLE I.  
UNSKILLED LABOR IN ELEVEN LEADING INDUSTRIES.

Class	No. of Relatively Unskilled	Per cent. total Employees	Highest Me- dian Rate of Wages per week
Cotton.....	272,575	90	\$10.00
Clothing, factory product .....	249,852	91	11.50
Lumber and Planing Mills.....	263,780	74	10.50
Iron and Steel Mills.....	212,000	80	12.00
Carriages and Wagons .....	48,741	69	12.50
Boots and Shoes.....	107,215	75	12.50
Flour Mills .....	25,951	70	12.50
Agricultural Implements.....	31,741	78	12.50
Foundries and Metal Working..	227,500	65	13.50
Printing.....	66,410	41	9.50
Glass.....	26,937	51	11.50

Among the male employees in the cotton industry I have classed as skilled only the foremen, beamers, loom fixers, spinners and section hands, and as unskilled the general hands, laborers, helpers, weavers, etc.; in the lumber and planing mills the unskilled include the laborers, machine tenders, sorters and teamsters; in the foundries and machine shops, assemblers, laborers, helpers, machine operators, and general hands; in the carriage and wagon factories, finishers, laborers, helpers and general hands; in the clothing trade, sewing machine operators, bushelers, general hands, etc.; in the flour mills, all except millers and foremen; in the printing establishments, the women workers, general hands, laborers, helpers

and apprentices; in the boot and shoe industry, the women workers and all male employees except cutters, edgers and foremen. According to this classification, a large majority of the workers are unskilled in every industry specified except printing and glass. The figures chosen as the dividing line between skilled and unskilled in these trades is a low one, but the relatively greater proportion of skilled labor is nevertheless exceptional since there are very few workers in either industry of the middle grade. They are, for the most part, either low-paid as indicated or else very well paid with weekly wages of \$13 to \$16, \$18, or even \$20. It must be remembered, however, that employment is very subject to fluctuation in both industries and that the annual earnings are correspondingly reduced.

It is probably a safe estimate then that less than one-third of the 11,358,000 male employees of industry can be classed as relatively skilled workers; that is to say, as men whose wages approach \$2.25 a day or \$13.50 a week *in good times and when employed*. What annual income this means can only be roughly estimated. The Bulletins of the Department of Labor of New York show an average amount of unemployment of about 15 per cent. among the members of unions in good times. The proportion of idleness among the unskilled workers (who are so largely unorganized) would be considerably greater. If we estimate unemployment, however, at 15 per cent. this would make the annual income in good times, slightly less than \$600 for that class of labor we have classed as relatively unskilled. More than two-thirds of the male employees of the industries of the United States will fall in this class.

Three fundamental tendencies in the organization of the armies of industry have caused this astounding increase of unskilled labor:

*First*—Unskilled operations have been taken away from the artisan and placed in the hands of the unskilled.

*Second*—Skilled operations have been subdivided and specialized and the new work largely taken away from the skilled and distributed among unskilled workmen. At the same time the work remaining to the skilled men is simplified and the degree of skill required is lessened. To this double tendency is due the increasing uniformity of rates of wages of the skilled and unskilled.

*Third*—A third tendency results from the fact that similar differentiations have been going on in many different industries at

the same time. Machinists, molders, woodworkers, machine tenders, porters, packers, assemblers and common laborers, etc., are now employed in a large proportion of the great industries. Each of these tendencies can be studied in the Census returns.

*First*—Unskilled operations have been taken away from the skilled worker and placed in the hands of the relatively unskilled. This is clearly shown by the Census of Wages and Employees. (See Table II.) Dividing the employees between skilled and unskilled as before, we get the following increase of the number of skilled and unskilled workers in some of the leading industries. The relative increase of the unskilled is striking in every industry mentioned except cotton, which underwent the change before this decade, as is evident from the fact that nine-tenths of its employees fall within our class of the relatively unskilled.

TABLE II.  
RELATIVE INCREASE OF SKILLED AND UNSKILLED EMPLOYEES  
IN LEADING INDUSTRIES.

Class	1890 — Men — 1900		Increase	P. C.
Agricultural Implements:				
Skilled .....	604.....	1,705.....	1,101 .....	184
Unskilled.....	1,623.....	6,728.....	5,105 .....	314
Lumber and Planing Mills:				
Skilled.....	260.....	284.....	24 .....	10
Unskilled.....	337.....	418.....	81 .....	24
Flour Mills:				
Skilled.....	132.....	128.....	4*.....	3*
Unskilled.....	803.....	1,381.....	574 .....	70
Printing:				
Skilled.....	1,847.....	1,290.....	557 .....	30
Unskilled.....	605.....	894.....	289 .....	44
Carriage and Wagon Factories:				
Skilled.....	463.....	382.....	81*.....	17*
Unskilled.....	395.....	504.....	109 .....	28
Iron and Steel Mills:				
Skilled.....	671.....	735.....	64 .....	9
Unskilled.....	12,573.....	19,396.....	6,823 .....	54
Cotton:				
Skilled.....	753.....	1,038.....	285 .....	38
Unskilled.....	599.....	772.....	173 .....	29
Boots and Shoes:				
Skilled.....	294.....	355.....	61 .....	21
Unskilled.....	240.....	457.....	217 .....	90

\*Decrease.

*Second*—Skilled operations have been simplified and subdivided. Part of the work has been given to the relatively unskilled groups. The result has been (1) that the wages of the two groups have been brought towards a common level, and (2) that the wages of individuals of the same group or class have been equalized to a large degree.

The following tables (from the Census of Employees and Wages) show both tendencies. The Census replaces averages by medians; that is, the rate above which half the workers are paid and below which half are paid. Foundries and Metal Working has been selected for the first tendency as one of the most highly organized industries. It will be noticed that the skilled workers show, on the whole, a slight decrease while the unskilled show a considerable increase in the rate of wages. (See Table III.)

TABLE III.  
RELATIVE CHANGES IN WAGES IN SKILLED AND UNSKILLED LABOR

	1890	Medians 1900	Change in per cent.
Foundries and Metal Working, Skilled:			
Foremen, " .....	\$18.00	\$18.00	00
Blacksmiths, " .....	16.50	15.00*	9*
Boilermakers, " .....	13.50	13.00*	3*
Molders, " .....	13.50	15.00	11
Carpenters " .....	13.50	13.00*	3*
Woodworkers and Pattern			
Makers, " .....	16.00	16.50	3
Sheet Metal Workers, " .....	13.50	13.00*	3*
Engineers, " .....	13.50	13.00*	3*
Erectors and Assemblers, " .....	12.50	12.00*	4*
Foundries and Metal Working, Unskilled:			
Machinists, " .....	9.00	10.00	11
General Hands, Helpers			
and Laborers, " .....	8.00	8.50	6
Helpers, Blacksmiths, " .....	11.00	10.50*	5*
Helpers, Boilermakers, " .....	9.00	9.00	00
Helpers, Machinists, " .....	9.00	9.00	00
Helpers, Molders and Core-			
makers, " .....	8.00	9.00	12
Machine Tenders and 2d			
Class Machinists, " .....	9.00	10.00	11

\*Decrease.

The tendency of the wages of a majority of the individuals



in each class to approach a common level is also shown by the Census of Employees and Wages. "Quartiles" are those wage rates between which lie the wages of half the employees of each class. The difference between the quartiles is the range of the wages of half the employees of each class. The range in wages of the more important classes of labor in several industries is given. It will be noticed that the range of the wages of a majority of nearly every class of employees has either remained about stationary or decreased since 1890. (See Table IV.)

TABLE IV.  
DECREASING RANGE IN WAGES.

	Range in Wages. (Difference in Quartiles).	
	1890	1900
Boots and Shoes:		
General Hands.....	\$5.00	\$5.00
Bottom Finishers.....	6.50	6.00
Stock Fitters.....	9.00	5.00
Clothing Trade:		
Sewing Machine Operators.....	7.50	7.00
Bushelers.....	2.50	3.00
General Hands.....	5.00	6.00
Agricultural Implements:		
Assemblers.....	5.50	4.50
General Hands, Helpers and Laborers.....	4.50	4.00
Machine Operators.....	5.00	4.00
Foundries and Metal Working:		
Erectors and Assemblers.....	7.00	5.50
General Hands, Helpers and Laborers.....	2.50	2.50
Helpers, Blacksmiths.....	4.00	3.50
Helpers, Boilermakers.....	3.50	3.50
Helpers, Machinists.....	2.50	3.00
Helpers, Molders and Coremakers.....	3.00	2.00
Machine Tenders and Second Class Machinists...	5.50	5.00
Lumber and Planing Mills:		
Laborers.....	6.00	5.00
Machine Tenders.....	3.50	5.00
Sorters.....	2.50	1.50
Teamsters.....	2.00	1.50

The third cause of the increase of the importance of the unskilled is the increasing importance of certain common operations as transportation, packing and power production in every industry.

This tendency has greatly added to the number of workers in these occupations in every industry where they are found. (See Table V.)

TABLE V.  
INCREASE IN RELATIVELY UNSKILLED OCCUPATIONS.  
(See Census of Occupations.)

	1890	Men — 1900	Increase	P. C.
Laborers (not specified) . . . . .	1,858,558	2,505,287	646,729	34
Draymen, hackmen, teamsters, etc. . .	368,265	538,029	169,764	46
Engineers and F'm'n (not locomotive) .	139,718	223,318	83,600	59
Porters and Helpers (in stores, etc.) . .	24,002	53,625	29,623	123

We have shown that unskilled labor is already in the majority in most industries; that its importance is increasing; that it is becoming less separated from skilled labor; that there is a tendency toward a leveling in wages, and that not only the lines separating the trades within each industry are breaking down, but also there is a great group of trades that flourish in several, or in nearly all industries, thus bringing them into the same labor market. We must now show the social results of these economic forces. First, two great facts that urge the unskilled worker to active discontent must be recalled to mind.

*First*, unskilled labor has not secured its share in our prosperity. The Census of Employees and Wages shows that wages in many industries were stagnant from 1890 to 1900, a period in which the per capita wealth and income of the nation increased over 19 per cent. Of twenty-five leading industries examined in the Census of Wages and Employees, only eight showed any noticeable increase; four showed marked decreases and 13 paid about the same wages in 1900 as in 1890.

*Second*, unskilled labor has suffered most from instability of employment. The railroads discharged 93,000 employees from July 1, 1893, to July 1, 1894, nearly 11 per cent. of the total employed. The number of officers and station agents was, however, actually increased during the year. Section foremen were practically undisturbed. Less than 11 per cent. of the engineers, firemen, conductors, switchmen, machinists and other shopmen were let out. But 12 per cent. of the relatively unskilled trainmen and shopmen, 16 per cent. of the section hands and 19 per cent. of the "other" employees and laborers were discharged. The unskilled workers

go first because they can be more easily replaced when needed again. They are made to shoulder most of the burden of hard times. The unrest of labor is not then to be attributed to the unions, but to low wages and irregular employment. Since the census of 1900 the wages of the unskilled have risen slightly, but none of the statistics available indicate a rise as rapid as that of the cost of living. Moreover, the tendency of wages is now downward again and steadily decreasing employment has already thrown hundreds of thousands out of work. Under these conditions the pressure to strike comes, not from the labor leaders, but from the rank and file and even in very many instances from the unorganized.

The unions are no longer ignoring unskilled labor. There is hardly one of them, the very existence of which is not threatened by this reserve army of hungry, restless and unorganized workmen. They have boldly tackled the problem, but they have not solved it. It is only recently that their efforts to organize the unskilled have met with any success. Until the last decade their work had been almost entirely with the relatively skilled.

Only about 3,000,000 workers are so far organized into the unions. Since there are almost 4,000,000 in the class of the relatively skilled, it has been widely, but wrongly, inferred that the unions are operating and must operate nearly altogether within the ranks of skilled labor, and it has been doubted if the trade unions have shown any ability or anxiety to handle the problem of the unskilled. From English testimony it would seem that this has largely been true in that country, but the history of the trade unions in the United States in the past five years has tended to prove the very reverse to be the case in this country. Not only are the unions here taking up the organization of the unskilled in order to strengthen their present position but they find that they are forced to organize them in self-defense.

The newer, more successful and more rapidly growing unions belong to another economic period from that in which the old ones had their origin. As a result of the growing importance of unskilled labor they are dominated by its demands, the character of their membership has changed, their methods of fighting have changed and their attitude towards industry and the public is the process of becoming completely reversed.

The militant policy of the new unions as that of the old rests on the fundamental assumption that the members do not expect to rise from their class but with it. The wage earner in the words of Mr. Mitchell, "has made up his mind that he must remain a wage earner and that he will never become a capitalist." But the new unionist has gone further than this. Forced by economic development he has broadened his conception of what constitutes his class. He has come to see that his future does not lie in building up a monopoly of labor in his trade. He has already made up his mind that he must cast in his lot with all the workers in his industry and he is now coming to feel that his lot is bound up with that of the whole working class. The old trade unions are rapidly being absorbed by the new trade and industrial unions, and these in their turn by the nation-wide labor movement.

No better or more important illustration of how the new union fights can be found than the Anthracite Coal Strike. The success of the miners was based on the following policies:

*First*—The organization of all the men skilled or unskilled about the mines, including even laborers, teamsters and engineers—the appeal to unskilled labor.

*Second*—The appeal to all other union men and to sympathizers in the mining districts; successful calls for financial aid, for social ostracism of non-union men, for the use of the boycott and the political action which resulted in the State law which forbade imported miners to operate without a license.

*Third*—Finally the union appealed to the whole public. The broadest policy of the union was to conduct itself so as to prevent consumers of coal from placing the blame for their sufferings on the shoulders of the miners. Favorable public opinion not only in the mining camps, but of the nation at large had to be secured. It was this primarily and not the sufferings of the men that forced the President to interfere in the union's favor, and brought about the final union success.

The United Mine Workers as a result of this strike is not only the strongest organization in the country, both financially and numerically, but also the most typical of the new unions. Let us contrast its fighting methods with the Machinists' Union, which was a few years ago struggling in vain with the old policies and

has only recently adopted the new standpoint. Several years ago the machinists instituted what became almost a national strike. Employers were not organized and the union at first met with considerable success. But it was following the old restrictive policies. It was attempting to maintain control over the supply of skilled labor. The unskilled it kept out. The normal course of industry soon brought it about that there were more 'helpers' and 'machine hands' outside of the union than there were 'machinists' in it. The employers now organized, adopted the open shop and the employment bureau (a potential blacklist), and wielded this reserve army against the union. In many localities the union has found itself helpless. In some of the largest manufacturing centers the employers have almost succeeded in putting it out of business. During the late industrial boom, union wages were paid and union hours prevailed, but the union was not recognized, and union machinists fear that this presages a reduction of wages and an increase of hours when work becomes slack.

The union at last saw that the revolution which had taken place in the industry demanded a revolution in the union. At the recent convention in Milwaukee, the most momentous struggle in its history took place between the advocates of the old and the new unionism. After a series of the stormiest sessions, it was decided that the old policy must be abandoned. Helpers, machine hands and everybody that works about lathes, planers, drills, etc., are to be admitted to the union ranks. The decision has already been acted on. Only recently one of the metal workers' unions, which had already taken in a number of unskilled men, has been amalgamated with the Association of Machinists and tens of thousands of unskilled workers admitted by a single act.

The attitude of the new Unionism toward industry itself is as completely the reverse of that of the old unions as is its attitude toward the unskilled workers, toward the labor movement and toward the public. As a result of the need of the co-operation of the unskilled workers in the unions, all effort to restrict the entrance of new men into the union or the trade is abandoned. Since nearly all workers are becoming potential competitors, the union is anxious to secure as many members as possible. The rigid definition of the line between skilled and unskilled work is given

up because the unskilled workers constitute a majority of the new union and insist on free admission to the ranks above them; restriction of apprentices is gradually abandoned. The wages of the unskilled workers are advanced more in proportion than those of the skilled workers for the same reason. The subdivision of the workers into the many different classes is opposed on the ground that it has a tendency to bring internal conflicts into the union.

Restriction of output, if still maintained, is maintained on new grounds: the unwillingness of the men to overexert themselves to the verge of nervous exhaustion, spells of sickness and premature old age. The old unions systematically restricted output and worked for an under supply of skilled labor. This they could obtain either by diminishing the supply or increasing the demand. By means of tacit or expressed agreements among the employed to do less work they increased the demand. They called this making the work go round or making it last over into periods of slack employment. Now, with a surplus supply of labor accessible, if not actually at hand, the competition for employment among the members of the unions and the potential competition of those who may become members of the union at any moment is so great that these old policies are being abandoned. It is only in the union shop that such tactics can be safely and continuously employed. The open shop with the freedom it gives the employer to discharge unsatisfactory men has given them their death blow.

Restriction of machinery has taken a new form. It now prevails principally where some revolutionary change is in progress as in the introduction of mining machinery in the coal mines. The new coal-mining machines are being fought by the unions not directly, but through a differential against the machine. A higher rate is charged for the machine men, not so much because their labor is more skilled, as because of the desire to check somewhat the introduction of the machines. This differential is, however, frequently changed. There is no effort to prevent the introduction of machinery, but only to make it sufficiently gradual, so that there will not be a sudden replacement of the men by a different class of workers. Since the unskilled are now generally in control the effort to prevent a machine from taking the place of some small

group of skilled workers has been almost entirely abandoned. The new employers' associations have been fighting effectively the remnants of this policy that still remain.

The startling union successes of recent years have been among the unions that follow the new policies. This is shown by the relative numerical increase of the various unions. Since the beginning of the recent days of prosperity in 1898 or 1899 all the unions have grown. Their total membership has been more than doubled, but the growth has been very unequally distributed. The old type of union of skilled workers has grown steadily but slowly with an average increase of something more than 50 per cent. Among these are: The Railway Employees, The Building Trades, Printers, Cigarmakers, Brewery Workmen, Iron Molders, Boiler-makers and Blacksmiths and Iron, Steel and Tin Workers.

Another group of organizations, all of them either new or practically reorganized in recent years, has had a total growth of approximately 300 per cent., as indicated by its representation at Conventions of the American Federation of Labor: It includes The Coal Miners, The Metal Miners, The Street Railway Employees, The Seamen, The Longshoremen, The Ready-made Clothing Makers, The Boot and Shoe Workers, Meat Packers and Butchers, The Machinists, The Teamsters, The Woodworkers, The Stationary Engineers and Firemen.

These newer unions would seem at first to have nothing in common. The teamsters and longshoremen work in trades where there is little or no machinery to be handled while the woodworkers and machinists are exclusively machine employees. The miners embrace all the miscellaneous trades employed by the mines, whereas the stationary engineers and firemen are isolated either as individuals or small groups in every sort of an establishment where steam power or heat is required. The clothing makers and the boot and shoe workers are quite largely women while the trades just mentioned are exclusively men. But all are composed largely of relatively unskilled labor. The new growth among these unions as well as most of that of the old unions is almost entirely among the unskilled. The new growth in the old unions of the building trades is largely among those branches called unskilled by the trade itself.

The new unions fall into two widely different classes which

seem on the verge of disrupting the whole labor movement, the "industrial" union and the new "trade" union. The "industrial" union claims to embrace every employee of its industry in all its trades. The miners, for instance, embrace both teamsters and engineers employed at the mines. The new "trade" union claims to have a right to embrace all the workers at the trade in every industry. The old unions were called "trade" unions but they were fundamentally different from the new "trade" unions of to-day. They were largely recruited from a *single trade within a single industry*. The compositors, for instance, are undoubtedly a trade union, but they are employed only in printing establishments. The machinists are a trade union of a new type. They are employed in machine shops, engine shops, boiler shops, ship-building yards, carbuilding shops, agricultural implement shops and in nearly every important industry. Teamsters, to take a newer and even more striking example, are employed by nearly every industrial establishment in the country, as also are engineers and firemen.

The causes that gave origin to the industrial unions are the increasing proportion of unskilled workers in the industry, the decreasing sharpness of definition of the line between the skilled and unskilled trades and the greater ease with which the occupations of the skilled can be learned by the unskilled.

The origin of the new *trade* unions lies in the ability of workers in the various trades to take up similar occupations in other industries than those in which they are employed. A change of industry always necessitates some adaptation in the workman, nor is it possible for men of a given trade to transfer themselves from a given industry to every other industry in which men of the same trade are employed. But it is possible for employees in a trade A, to transfer themselves to another trade, B, and for the employees of the trade B, to transfer themselves to the trade C, etc. A milk wagon teamster cannot become a coal teamster in every case, but he can usually find some teamster's or driver's work less strenuous to which he may adapt himself, while many classes of teamsters, such as van drivers, etc., can learn to replace the coal teamster.

Both forms of new unionism then, industrial unionism and the new trade unionism, are the result of these deep-seated economic



characteristics of our age. They both result from the increasing importance of unskilled labor.

*Industrial* unionism requires the organization of the unskilled primarily because the modern strike means a shut down of the whole industry. But the shut down of an industry means that all must be idle. Skilled and unskilled must strike together and share the expenses as well as the benefits of the conflict.

The new trade unionism means the organization of the unskilled because no boundary between skilled and unskilled labor can be drawn inside of the trade. How is any rigid test to be set up for admission into the organization of the firemen or teamsters' unions, or even those of the machinists or of the woodworkers? There may be high degrees of specialization and even of skill within the trades, and yet the specialties are so closely related that they shade off into one another by imperceptible degrees.

These two new forms of unionism are everywhere superseding the old. The machinists, the iron, steel and tin workers, the brewery workmen and the printers have already broadened their policies to adapt themselves to the new idea. The building trades have long been closely associated in the cities and towns in the Building Trades Councils where the trade organizations are preserved, but are closely federated into an industrial group.

The two forms of organization seem to be opposed at every point. The industrial union fights for the control of the industry. It comes to see, therefore, that it cannot afford to antagonize the consumer of the product of that industry. In some cases, as in that of the miners, the public sympathy of the consumer alone is enough to insure victory. In others he must be persuaded to boycott non-union men, to patronize the union label or to refuse to ride in the street cars of an "unfair" corporation. The *trade* unionist, on the other hand, has little to fear or to expect from the consumer. He often does not hesitate to antagonize him. The trade unionists' wages are not a very large factor in the cost of any given product and do not, therefore, concern the purchaser of the product.

The contrast between the two types of unions can also be seen in their attitude towards politics. Where labor is well organized, as in the mining camps and manufacturing towns, one or another of the

industrial unions dominates local politics. The trade unions are powerful politically only in the large commercial centers.

The contrast is equally marked in the fight with organized employers. Wherever a combination or monopoly does not already exist to unite the employers, the industrial unions have given rise to the relatively conservative employers' trade associations. The trade unions, on the other hand, have been the principal cause of bringing into being the local employers' associations, which have, in many cases, taken into their ranks, not only every class of manufacturer, but also banks, commercial houses and even professional men. These are the radical associations that lead in the fight for the open shop and are the first to introduce the new blacklist, the so-called employment bureau.

The industrial organizations are universally favorably disposed towards the trusts and larger employers while the trade unions are as likely to prefer the smaller employers and competitive industry. Industrial unions are universally and necessarily in favor of the regulation of the trusts. Their aim is the representation of the industry in politics and in many cases, as that of the brewery workmen, the boot and shoe workers and the Western Federation of Miners, they favor socialism or the assumption of industrial functions by a democratic state.

Again the industrial organizations are very often protectionist. They realize that the lowering of the tariff might, in some cases, mean a serious decrease in the amount of employment afforded by their industry. The trade unionists are usually free traders. They are anxious to obtain a lower cost of living and have little to lose from the lowering of the tariff on any particular industry, *e. g.*, the building trades, teamsters, stationary firemen, engineers, etc.

The trade organizations are more interested in local politics, sometimes on account of laws regulating their trades as with the engineers and building trades, sometimes on account of the conditions of public contracts they can control, as with the teamsters, the building trades, and so forth. The industrial organizations operate principally in industries that have a national market and are more subject to the national and state governments.

The last and most important differentiation is the direct conflict arising when jurisdiction over the same men is claimed by both types

of unions. The new trade unions, such as the teamsters, engineers and firemen, machinists and woodworkers, are engaged in bitter conflicts with the industrial unions, miners, brewery workers, slaughter house employees, etc., to decide to which union workingmen belonging to the former trades, but at work in the latter industries, shall belong. The contest between the skilled and unskilled workers that was formerly waged within the labor movement and threatened to limit it to the upper third, the aristocracy of labor, has disappeared. In its place has risen the fight between the industrial and the trade union, a fight that, far from disrupting the labor movement, can have but one result—to solidify all the unions into one complex and differentiated but unified whole.

Neither type of union can drive the other out of existence since both are the result of deep-seated economic causes. It is sometimes hastily assumed that the new type of union is the industrial union and that it is replacing the trade union. On the assumption of this necessary conflict the whole labor movement is at present split into two camps, the trade autonomists and the industrialists. Mr. Gompers is a trade autonomist. Mr. Mitchell is an industrialist. Of course, they have effected a working compromise but every convention of the American Federation of Labor is torn by the dissensions of the two factions. The fight is largely based on the failure to distinguish between the old and the new "trade" union. Neither industrialist nor trade autonomist can win, because each represents a principle of modern industry. The trade autonomists reflect the tendency of all industries to introduce into their development certain common classes of employees, and, therefore, certain common elements. In the ranks of capital a similar tendency is seen in the common control by some of the large monopolies of subsidiary industries in which some product of the monopoly is an important factor. The industrial union, in recognition of this tendency, seeks to include in its ranks all the employees of this new type of industrial organization.

Another tendency of capital is to tie several industries together on the community of interest plan. Railroads, banks and groups of capitalists gain the control of industries with which they are affiliated. The only bond of affiliation seems to be the common need of all industries of financial and transportation facilities. So the new trade unions, recognizing the common need of many industries for

certain classes of labor and the fact that these industries compete against one another for this labor, have organized it along trade lines in all these industries to prevent the hostile employer from drawing non-union labor from other industries.

In the sphere of capital it is evident that no agreement between the two tendencies can be reached until all industries are thoroughly integrated and organized in a single mass. Already a few groups of capitalists dominate the more important industries. In the same way, the conflict between industrial unions and trade unions of the new type must continue until both are fused into a unified labor movement.

The trade and industrial unions are not in necessary conflict—they are the warp and the woof of the new labor movement. As all the workers in an industry must fight together or not at all, they must belong to a single industrial union. Since workers in different industries are employed at similar tasks, and are in competition with one another and must also be organized by trades, if they are not to be used against one another by the employers; since the labor market for some trades is not confined to a single industry; therefore, the union cannot be confined to that industry.

The only possible solution is one already coming into vogue—the exchange of cards between the unions and the recognition that trade and industrial unions must act together. This is not the principle of the Federation of Labor, which recognizes trade and industrial autonomy, but a radically new one. It can lead to but one result—the solidification of the labor movement with all the far reaching implications that must follow when the barriers that the unions have so long recognized between trade and trade and industry and industry fall. For the unions of the larger industries must then act closely with the unions of many trades, and the unions of all the trades must co-operate with those of many industries. With the innumerable combinations that must arise there will inevitably be woven the texture of a unified labor movement. Already the sympathetic strike, the financial assistance lent by all the unions to those involved in severe struggles, the boycott and common political aims, such as the eight hour and anti-injunction laws, require for their success the generous support of many unions and forecast a unified movement.

Organized capital is fast becoming one. Organized labor is not far behind. But the coming of monopolies and a general community of interest of capital has not been accompanied by monopolies in labor, but by precisely the reverse tendency, the increasing competition among individuals, the opening up of the skilled trades to the unskilled, the combination of the two classes in each industry, the development of a general labor movement, the broad appeal to the consumer and finally to the general public and the state.

When the industrial unions and trade unions shall have formed an effective treaty of peace, there will be no interval or stopping place until the complete organization of labor is reached. The amalgamation of all the labor unions into a single body or the increasing agreement on the part of all the unions on certain common lines of action, will create perhaps the most powerful economic and political force this country has produced. When once the union policies have been so broadened as to make room for unskilled labor as is the case to-day, there seems to be no reason to suppose that they will stop short of complete unity. They will then have, acting together in one organization, the majority of the consumers, voters and citizens of every industrial community in the United States.

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